

Go Red For Women Mobilizes Heart Disease Fight

If you notice more women, and men, than usual wearing red today there's a good reason. It is National Wear Red Day and the color red and a red dress are the adopted symbols of the American Heart Association's "**Go Red for Women**" campaign that urges women to pay attention to heart health. All Kansans are encouraged to wear red to raise awareness of the heart disease in women.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and legislators got a jump-start on **Go Red for Women** activities by posing for photos in red attire today in hopes of inspiring others to wear red tomorrow. The American Heart Association and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) also held a joint news conference at the statehouse today to call attention to the issue and the campaign.



"Kansas women should take time from their busy lives to learn about heart health and heart disease," said KDHE Secretary Roderick L. Bremby. "Women tend to worry about the health of their family and neglect their own health. Heart disease does not just affect men---an alarming number of women die from the disease each year."

"Last year, we discovered an alarming fact---that women still don't know heart disease is their number one killer," said Dr. Alice Jacobs, president of the American Heart Association. "In fact, more women still believe that cancer is the greatest health problem facing them today. **Go Red for Women** is beginning to change that."

Thousands of Americans will help women fight heart disease when they participate in the third year of the **Go Red For Women** initiative during February.

Go Red For Women began in February 2004 to raise awareness that heart disease is the Number 1 killer of women. According to an American Heart Association survey, only 13 percent of women consider cardiovascular disease their greatest risk. Cardiovascular disease causes about a death a minute among females. In 2003, 55 percent of all CVD deaths in Kansas were in women, compared to 53 percent of all CVD deaths in women nationally.

The presence of certain risk factors increases a woman's chance of developing cardiovascular disease. Kansas statistics for 2004 show:

- ♥ 1 in 4 adult females were diagnosed with high blood pressure
- ♥ 1 in 3 adult females had high blood cholesterol (among those who ever tested for blood cholesterol)
- ♥ 1 in 6 adult females were current cigarette smokers
- ♥ About 1 in 4 adult females were obese
- ♥ 1 in 14 adult females were diagnosed with diabetes

The campaign provides women tips and information on healthy eating, exercise, and risk factor reduction, such as smoking cessation, weight management, blood pressure control and blood cholesterol management.

Activities across Kansas and the country include:

- ♥ **Gov. Sebelius signs proclamation.** Gov. Sebelius signed a proclamation Jan. 30 that proclaims Feb. 3 to be **Go Red for Women** day in Kansas.
- ♥ **State legislators wear red.** On Feb. 2, the Governor and state legislators were dressed in red for pictures at the Capitol.
- ♥ **National Wear Red Day.** A national observance created by the American Heart Association, on Feb. 3, thousands of people, including employees at more than 3,000 companies, national and local news anchors and talk-show hosts will wear red to support the cause. The red dress and the color red are symbols for women and heart disease and **Go Red For Women** movement.
- ♥ **National landmarks and monuments.** National and local landmarks — including the Seattle Space Needle, Niagara Falls, the Empire State Building, Graceland and more — will be illuminated in red during February, which is American Heart Month, to further raise awareness of women and heart disease.

For more information about Go Red for Women, please call 1-888-MY-HEART (1-888-694-3278) or visit www.GoRedForWomen.org. Visit the KDHE Web site at www.kdheks.gov for additional health related information.